Spanning the Gap

Down by the Riverside

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by Jeanelia Domond

On Thursday, July 19, 2001, more than 100 employees and friends of Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area arrived at Dingmans Ferry Access to participate in the annual River Clean-up sponsored by Kittatinny Canoes. Prepared with their life preservers, scuba gear, and wet suits, they started off the morning with breakfast at 8:30 a.m.

At 10:00 a.m. Ruth Jones, owner of Kittatinny Canoes, briefed the crowd on the history of the Clean-up. "The river cleanup has been in effect for 12 years and in that time it has accumulated 189 tons of garbage and 6,000 tires, helping to make the Delaware one of the cleanest rivers in the country." Ms. Jones said. Her son, Dave Jones, and recreation area Superintendent Bill Laitner then gave a few words on safety, and encouraged people to go out there and enjoy themselves as well as clean up." The dirtier you get, the more fun you have," Laitner promised.

At 10:30 a.m. everyone was on the water, There were three courses: Milford to Dingmans, Dingmans to Bushkill, and Bushkill to Smithfield: eight, ten, and ten miles, respectively. The majority of the people did the Dingmans to Bushkill course, which took about five hours. Many were with family and friends and stopped to enjoy the water, catch a tan, swim, or even fish. Yet no one forgot their main objective, to clean up the river.

When everyone had reached the end of their course



Park Rangers pitch in.



The whole family takes part.



Delaware Township helps out.

(Photos courtesy of Ruth Jones and Kittatinny Canoes)

they were driven back to Dingmans Ferry in Kittatinny Canoe buses. Awaiting their arrival were dinner and camaraderie before all went their separate ways.

The River Clean-up is a beautiful and interesting event -- it not only helps others by ensuring that following generations can enjoy clean water, but it helps those who participate by giving them a chance to get to know one another better in a relaxed atmosphere. Anyone who missed out on the River Clean-up missed out on a good time. But if you want to experience it, don't worry. There's always next year!

Jeanelia Domond worked for the recreation area in the summer of 2001 cataloguing maps and digital images.